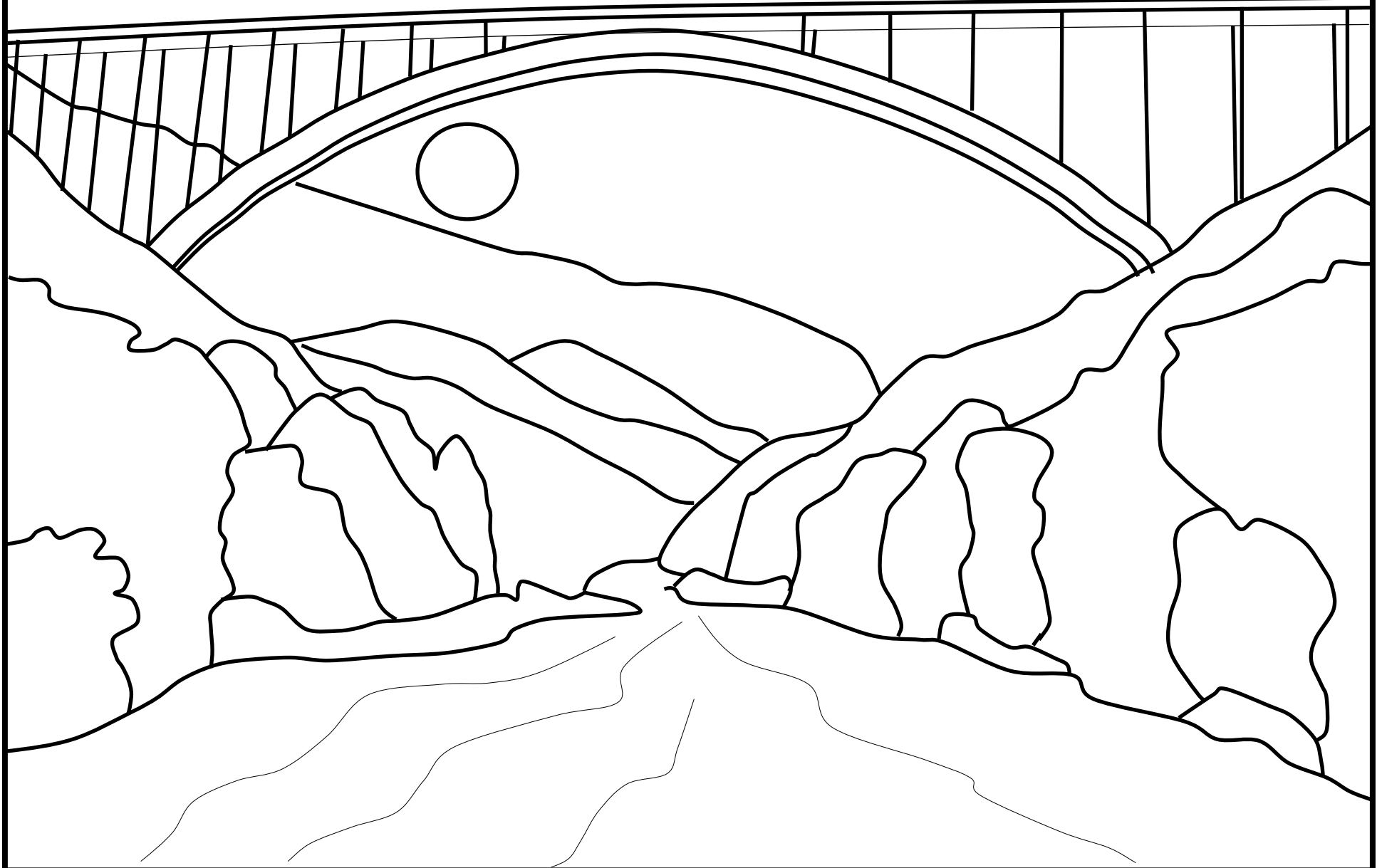
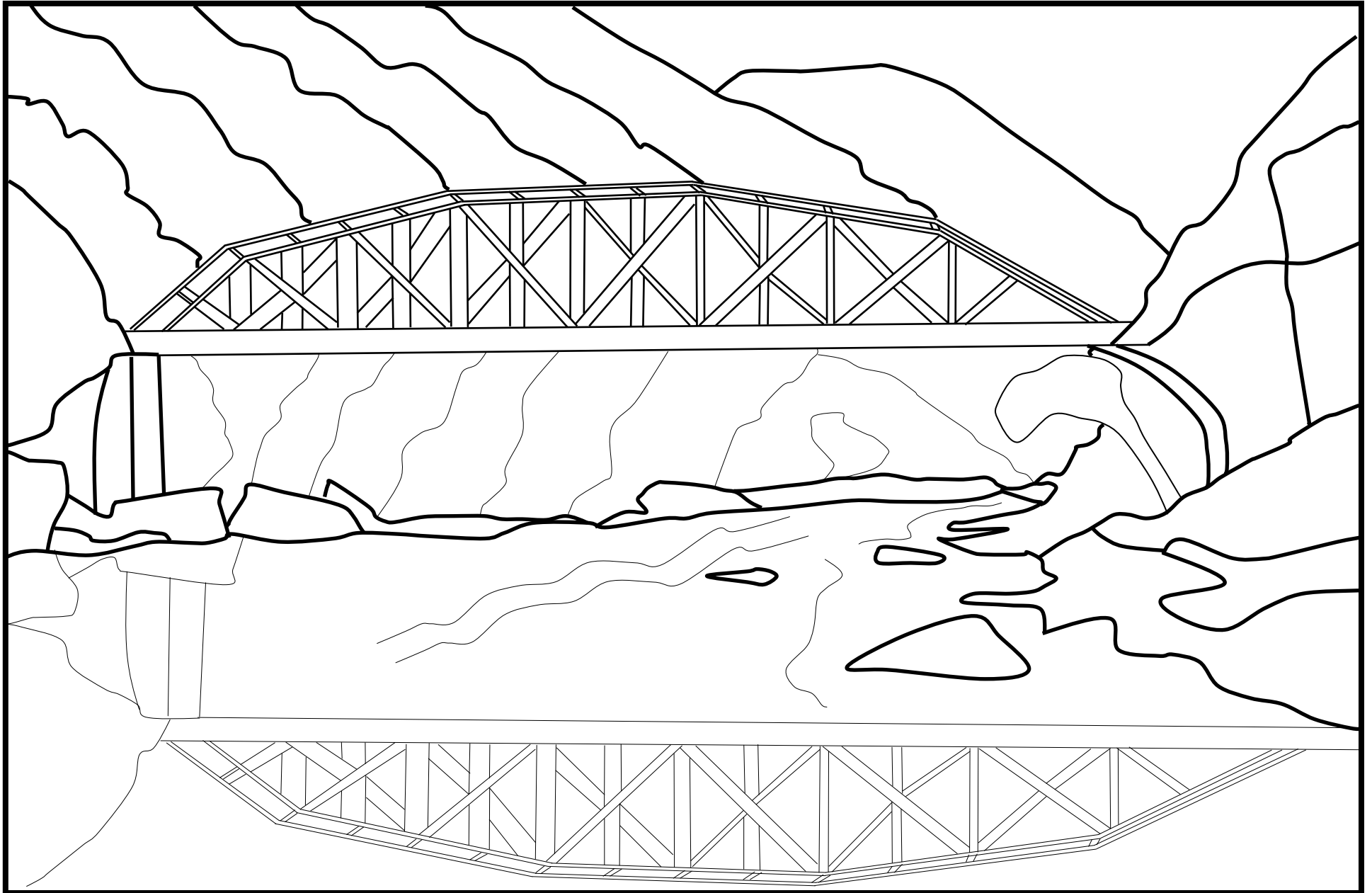


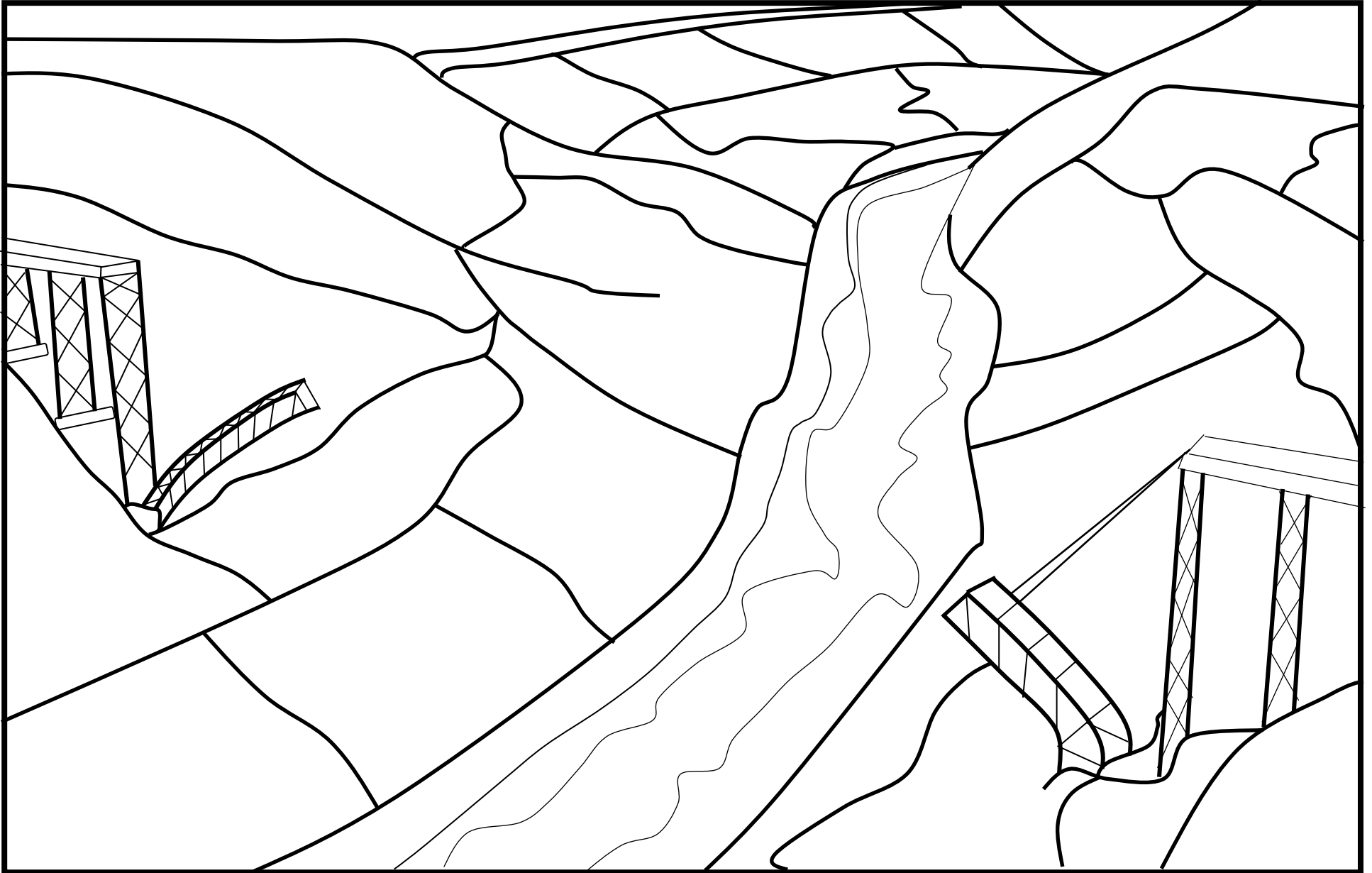
Building the Bridge



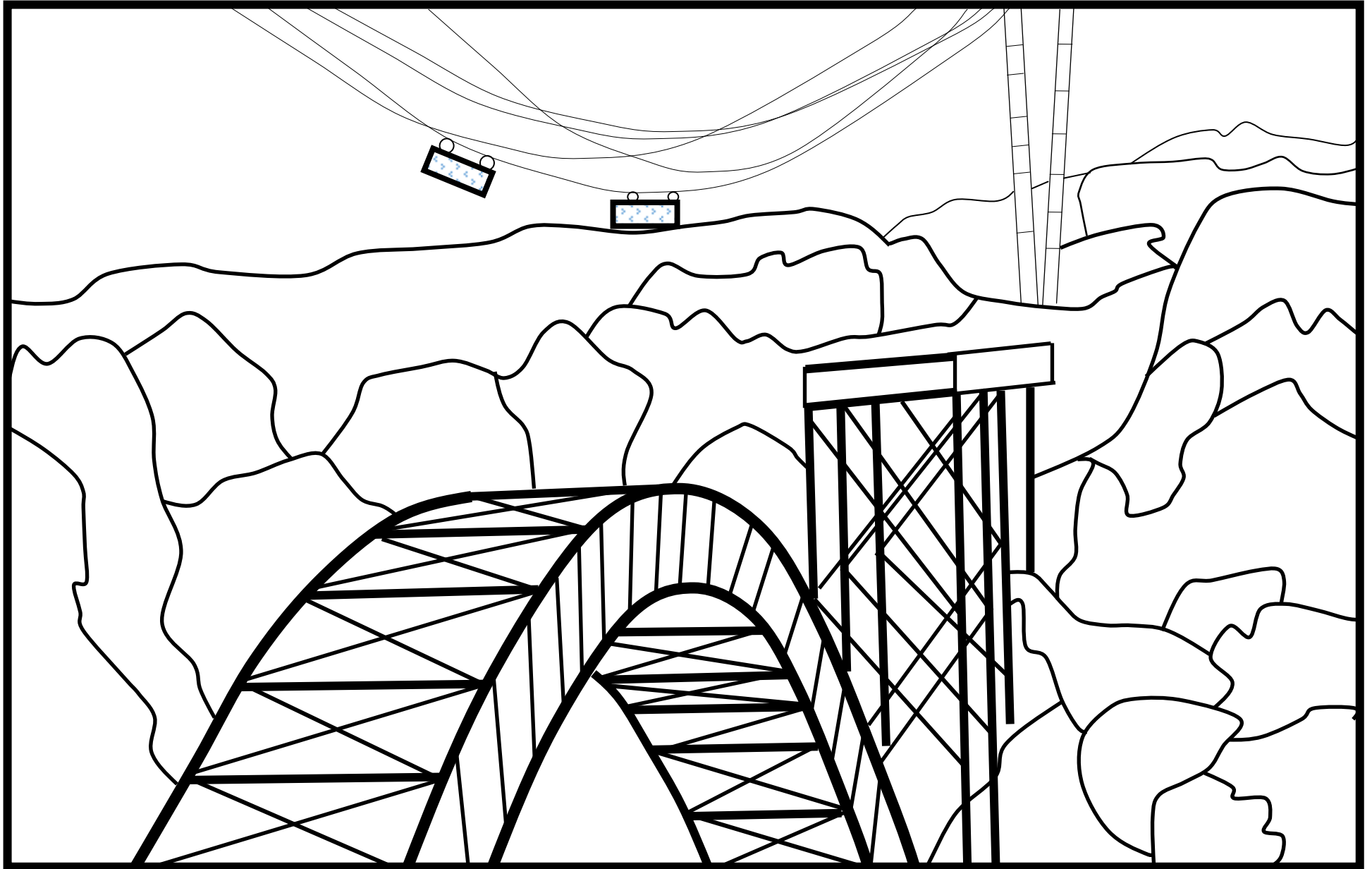
The first bridge built across the New River in Fayette County was the Fayette Station Bridge. It was built in 1889 and spanned 480 feet across the turbulent rapids below.



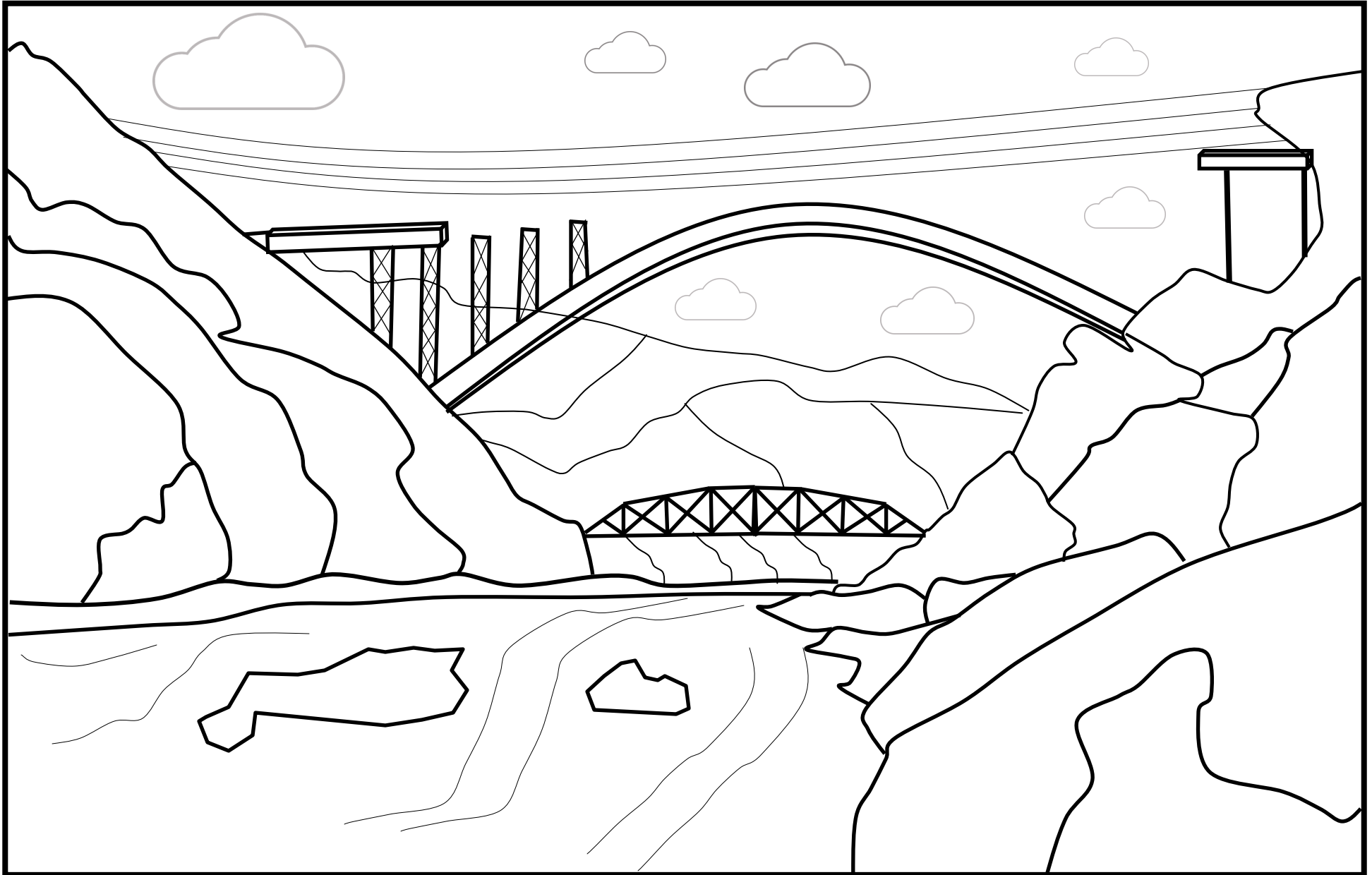
Fayette Station Bridge was useful for almost a hundred years, but it took almost an hour trip to cross the 3,000 foot wide gorge. The time it took to cross the gorge kept many people from using this route on their way through West Virginia, and many called for a new way to cross the gorge.



Construction of the New River Gorge Bridge began in February of 1974. In order to construct the bridge across the gorge, large towers were built on both sides. Wire cables connected the towers, and a trolley system was used to move pieces of the bridge that had already been assembled. The largest piece moved by the cable way weighed 92 tons!

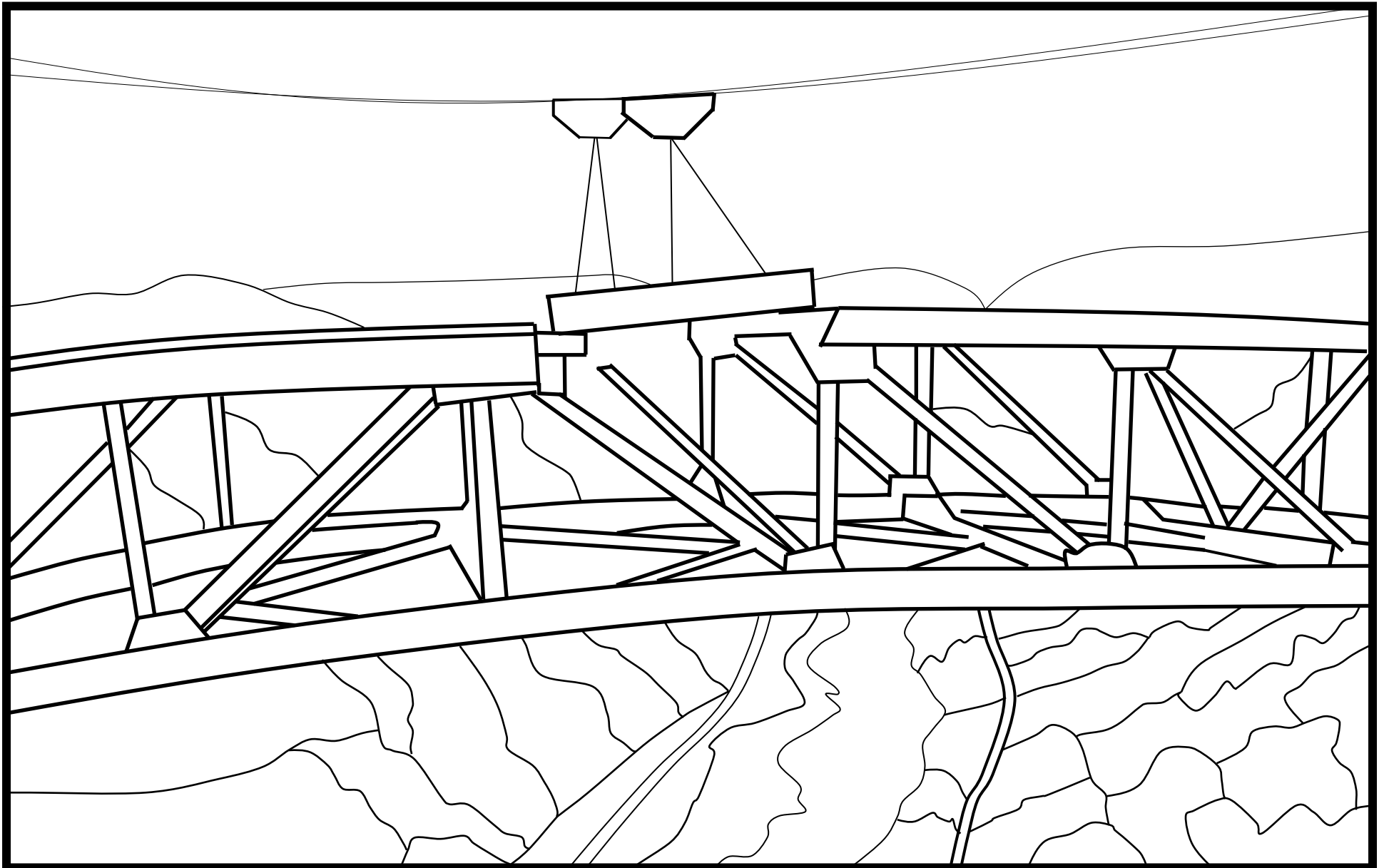


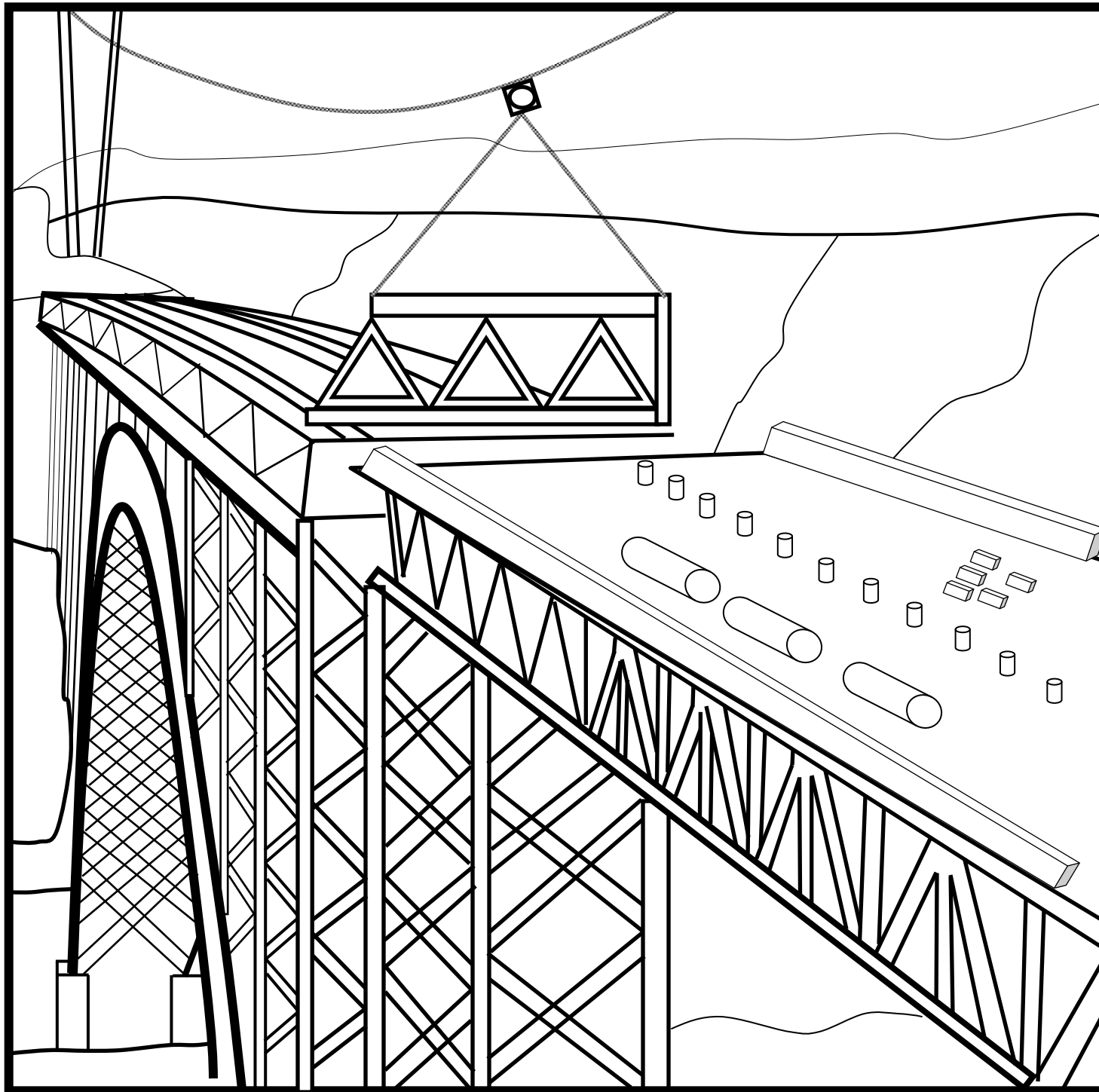
The bridge was constructed using Cor-Ten steel to reduce maintenance cost. This type of steel oxidizes over time, and weathering produces its own reinforcement. The process would turn the bridge brown and blend it into the natural surroundings. By not having to paint the bridge, the highway department estimated that they would save over a million dollars per year!



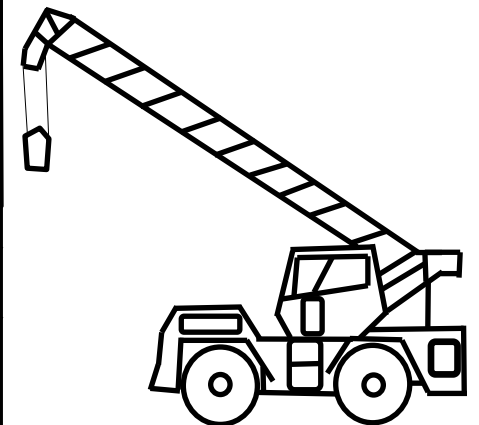
The Bridge is known for some impressive numbers here are a few:

- ★ **Height of Arch: 876 feet**
- ★ **Span of Arch: 1,700 feet**
- ★ **Bridge Width: 73 feet**
- ★ **Bridge Weight: 88 million pounds**
- ★ **Bridge Length: 3,030 feet**
- ★ **Total Steel Used: 22,700 pounds**





The bridge was completed in October of 1977. The new roadway transformed travel in West Virginia by taking what had been a slow scenic byway and turning it into a major link of commerce that connected the cities of the East to the heart of West Virginia. The New River Gorge Bridge stands today as a monument to what can happen when a great piece of engineering blends into a beautiful place.



WEST VIRGINIA

est. 1863

State Symbols

The New River Gorge Bridge has become a symbol of the state and appears on the state quarter. Here are some of West Virginia's other state symbols.

State Tree: Sugar Maple
State Mammal: Black Bear
State Bird: Northern Cardinal
State Fossil: Jefferson's Ground Sloth
State Flower: Rhododendron
State Insect: Honey Bee
State Butterfly: Monarch

